

Why Was Santos Trafficante Called Before the House Assassination Committee? - Part 2

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Many Americans provided material assistance to Castro before the revolution and maintained cordial relationships with the new regime for a time afterwards. This fact, however, is not widely recognized. Perhaps this is in part because many of them (Frank Sturgis is a self-admitted case) were serving at the time as informants for various U.S. intelligence agencies. When the Castro regime overtly turned to the left, all of these people left Cuba, and became zealots in the anti-Castro cause.

What about Trafficante? Lansky never returned to Havana after New Year's Eve, 1959, but some of Trafficante's enterprises continued to operate. McWillie was in Cuba until 1961, when the last of the casinos were closed by Castro. It has been suggested that Trafficante's contacts within the Cuban Government continued until 1963 and later. (Crile, "Washington Post", 5/16/76). This contention is based largely on the following: that Trafficante's attorney, and Jose Aleman's cousin, Rafael Garcia Bango, lives in Cuba today, where his brother is the long-time Minister of Sport; and that during the mid-1960's Castro, according to Federal narcotics agents, was rigging the Cuban lottery as a device to pay off his agents in Florida. The Castro agents were allegedly placing bets with Trafficante's numbers operators, and Trafficante's payoffs were pegged to the Cuban lottery drawings. The Cuban agents were communicating to Castro information about which numbers were getting the heaviest play.

It has been alternatively suggested that if Trafficante maintained contacts in Cuba after the revolution, it may not have been for Castro's sake. Rather, the contacts may have been "with the remaining French-Corsican Mafia casino operators in Havana, whose political allegiance was too complex to be easily characterized." (Peter Dale Scott, "Crime and Cover-Up", Westworks). Several Corsicans who continued their involvement in Cuban gambling after the revolution were named in 1964 testimony to the Senate Permanent Investigations Committee as being involved in narcotics traffic.

This is interesting in the light of the indictment on July 3, 1959 of Norman Rothman for unlawfully pledging \$8.5 million in bonds stolen in a Canadian bank robbery. The FBI called it "the biggest burglary in the world". ("New York Times", 7/4/59). Two of Rothman's co-defendants were Samuel Mannarino and Giuseppe Cotroni. Mannarino was a part-owner of the Havana Sans Souci Hotel with his brother Gabriel and Trafficante. (Rothman worked there in the early 1950's and was involved with both Mannarino brothers and Vito Genovese's son Michael in running arms to Castro in 1958). Cotroni, reportedly the head of the Mafia in Montreal, was identified in Senate narcotics hearings as "head of the largest and most notorious narcotics syndicate on the North American continent." Cotroni was a supplier of major Mafia traffickers in the United States, with direct French-Corsican sources of supply.

Five days after the Rothman indictment, on July 8, 1959, the Cuban cabinet ordered the deportation from Cuba of three Americans, one of whom was Trafficante. ("New York Times", 7/9/59). One of the others was "Lawrence Hall", who had served in Castro's army and was later a member of the No Name Key group of CIA agents and anti-Castro guerrillas in 1962-63 (about which Trafficante was asked by the Assassinations Committee).

It has been proposed that if Trafficante was involved in the Kennedy assassination, then a possible explanation is that he was working for Castro.

Yet this interpretation involves a complete misreading of the available evidence of Castro's perception of Kennedy at that time. (Jean Daniel, "New Republic", Dec. 1963; Arthur Schlesinger, "A Thousand Days"). Moreover, Trafficante's remark to Aleman, that Kennedy would be killed because of the Hoffa matter, indicates that Trafficante had other motives for wanting Kennedy off his back. Carlos Marcello also (Ed Reid, "The Grim Reapers") expressed a threat to Kennedy in late 1962 at a secret meeting (where he mentioned the possibility of using a "lone nut" as a patsy) in order to stop Robert Kennedy's drive against organized crime. □

Thurston - Continued from page 7

The reference to these "waivers" in the past by Mr. Rusk when he was currently issuing a different kind of "waivers" for Federal employees including one for Mr. Bancroft, sealed the fate of Mr. Otepka with the "New Team," the former Ambassador said.

The "paragovernment" of the New Team decided he had to be removed "no matter what the means", the former Ambassador concluded.

(End of Excerpt)

Can the above information quoted by Representative John Rarick be verified?

It is obvious that such information cannot at this time be verified. A person would be out of his mind if he would expect an organization like the Central Intelligence Agency to answer truthfully questions about this subject brought to it.

But it is astonishing how much light Representative John Rarick's extension of remarks sheds as a hypothesis.

It explains why the Bay of Pigs Operation was the last CIA operation to be fully held up to the light by "The New York Times."

It explains why "The New York Times" regularly goes out of its way to softpedal important questions about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy as in John Leonard's review: the CIA has its man at The Times.

It explains why Robert F. Kennedy as Attorney General never took any kind of action to reveal the plot which slew his brother: RFK was involved in other parts of the same operation.

It explains why the office of Senator Edward Kennedy invariably replies that the Senator has "full confidence in the findings of official law enforcement agencies." Senator Kennedy undoubtedly knows much more than he would like to know. In fact it is quite possible he is being blackmailed by the CIA, as for example by the Chappaquiddick operation, a most successful cloak and dagger caper.

And it supports the assertion of a coup d'etat in the United States, put forward in Jim Garrison's book, "Heritage of Stone"; see the review of Garrison's book that appeared in "Computers and Automation" for March, 1971, on page 45, and read Garrison's book if you have not yet read it. □